

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission,) Application No. C-3206
on its own motion, to administer)
the Nebraska Internet)
Enhancement Fund.) ORDER ADOPTING GRANT
) DOCUMENTS AND FORMS AND
) GRANT SCHEDULE
)
) Entered: May 31, 2006

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

The Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) opened the above-captioned docket, on its own motion, to administer the Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund (NIEF) established by the Legislature pursuant to *Neb. Rev. Stat.* §§ 86-579 through 86-580 (2002 Supp.). NIEF is to "be used to provide financial assistance to install and deliver broadband or other advanced telecommunications infrastructure and service throughout the state." § 86-579.

In furtherance of its statutory duty to "establish an application process through which any county or municipality in the state may apply for financial assistance from [the Fund]," the Commission staff, with the assistance of the NIEF Advisory Board¹, (Board) opened a grant application period in 2004 and awarded five grants. With the initial 2004 round of grant programs all completed, the Commission staff, with the assistance of the Board has evaluated the grant process from the 2004 grant period and is prepared to recommend that a second grant application period be opened. In furtherance of that goal, Commission staff and the Board modified the previously drafted grant documents including the Program Description and Grant Application Guidelines, Pre-Application Form, Application Form and Scoring Sheet and Grant Agreement. Copies of these documents are attached hereto as Exhibits A, B, C and D, respectively.

The NIEF Advisory Board has reviewed the above-mentioned modified documents and recommends that the Commission approve and adopt them for use in administering the 2006 round of Grant Applications and Awards from the Fund.

¹ Established pursuant to Title 291 Chapter 5 of the Nebraska Administrative Code, Section 6.15.

The NIEF Advisory Board further recommends that the Commission adopt the following schedule for the grant application period:

June 1, 2006: The Pre-Application period opens.

September 1, 2006: The Pre-Application period ends. All Pre-Applications must be submitted to the Commission no later than 5:00 p.m.

September 15, 2006: The Application period opens. Approved Pre-Applicants will be notified and asked to submit a full application.

November 15, 2006: The Application period ends. All Applications must be submitted to the Commission no later than 5:00 p.m.

The Advisory Board will then evaluate all Applications and submit its recommendation to the Commission as soon as possible. The Commission anticipates announcing the recipients of the grants in January 2007.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Program Description and Grant Application Guidelines, Pre-Application Form, Application Form and Scoring Sheet and Grant Agreement are approved as modified and adopted for use in administering the Fund for a 2006 round of Grant Applications and awards.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the recommended schedule for the grant application period as described herein is adopted.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 31st day of May, 2006.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Vice Chairman

ATTEST:

Deputy Director